



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

OFFICE OF CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
30 TRINITY STREET - 4th Floor
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

DEBORAH DEL PRETE SULLIVAN
LEGAL COUNSEL/EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER
(860) 509-6405 Telephone
(860) 509-6495 Fax
deborah.d.sullivan@jud.ct.gov

Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel Office of Chief Public Defender

Raised Bill No. 6025

An Act Concerning the Penalty for Engaging a Police Officer in Pursuit

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing March 16, 2009

The Office of Chief Public Defender opposes *Raised Bill No. 6025, An Act Concerning the Penalty for Engaging a Police Officer in Pursuit*. The Office of Chief Public Defender opposes the enhancement of this statute from a class A misdemeanor to a class D felony or from a class D felony to a class C felony depending upon the facts of the case.

In addition, the proposal requires the court to impose a mandatory minimum sentence on a person convicted of this offense. Throughout recent years, a large number of offenses initially codified as misdemeanors have been enhanced to felonies. As a result, the number of persons arrested and convicted of felonies has increased. Being charged with a felony can result in a higher bond being set at pretrial, a greater risk of incarceration upon conviction and a greater likelihood that a person will pursue post-conviction remedies. All of these can result in a greater cost to the criminal justice system. In addition, a felony conviction has collateral consequences which impact upon the person upon reentry into the community. These include barriers to employment, education and housing. Accordingly, such felony convictions will not only impact those convicted but may impact that person's family.